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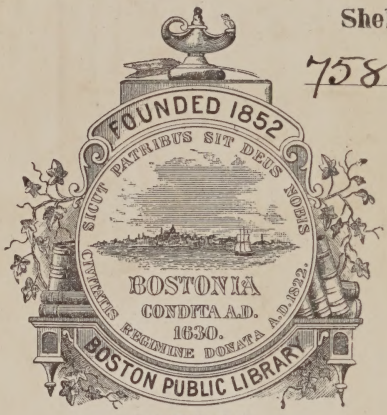

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SLAVEHOLDING

WEIGHED IN THE

BALANCE OF TRUTH,

7587.127

AND ITS

Comparative Guilt Illustrated.

BY CHARLES FITCH,
Pastor of First Free Congregational Church, Boston.

Second Edition.

BOSTON:
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SLAVEHOLDING, &c.

In order that we may understand the duties, which we owe to God and our fellow men, relative to the subject of slavery, it is necessary that we examine the institution, in all its bearings, upon the temporal and eternal interests of the enslaved; and ascertain, as far as we are able to do so, the extent of the injuries which it inflicts. To aid my readers in doing this is now my object.

I do not propose, however, to gauge this mammoth evil, and show you its exact dimensions; I fully confess to you in the outset, that I am not able so to do. That it is greater, in some of its bearings, at least, than any other evil that ever existed among men, and involves more guilt than any other crime ever committed by men, I fully believe, and shall endeavor to show; still the evil has a magnitude which my powers cannot describe; and the guilt a blackness which can never be painted, except by a pencil dipped in the midnight of the bottomless pit.

I am aware, that great complaint has often been made, of those, who have endeavored to rouse the indignation of their fellow men against the wrongs inflicted on the poor slave, that they deal in unjust severity of language. That they have at any time spoken more than the truth, I do not believe—nor can I admit that they have dealt out severity and

painted rebuke, in more unmeasured terms, than they have received them from their opponents.

When I remember, too, the long and profound slumberings, even of Christians on this subject, while their brethren were groaning under all the injuries, and cruelties, of iron-handed and steel-hearted oppression; I cannot suppress the feeling, that it was necessary, that those who would arouse them, should break forth as in thunder tones, and gird up all their energies, to shake off the sloth in which their fellow men were bound. They had themselves but just awoke as from a dream, and found that they had long been sleeping as on the overhanging brink of a burning crater; and when they saw the whole multitude of their fellow countrymen, still asleep in the same situation of fearful peril; who can wonder that they should cry out at the top of their voice, and resort to every possible expedient, to awaken those around them before it was too late? They heard the suppressed and terrific mutterings of the incipient earthquake below, and felt the ground beneath them already giving way, what less could they do, than to lay about them with all their strength, in the use of the first expedient, that seemed calculated to awaken and save? They had no time to devise a multitude of measures, and then choose from among them, such as would be most likely to satisfy those who were unwilling to be awaked. They must do something, and do it then. Previous measures, though entered upon ostensibly for the purpose of arousing men from sleep, had only served as a lull-a-by. The oppressors of their fellow men, were but becoming more secure in their claims of property in God's image—the chains of the slave were getting more and more firmly rivetted, and the whole nation were fast binding themselves in a willing bondage to those, who found it conducive to their ease, and interest, and shameful indulgence, to be permitted to inflict all the wrongs they pleased on their fellow

men, with none to utter a single note of remonstrance or rebuke. It was seen that the press was bribed, and the pulpit gagged, and the lips of the multitude padlocked, and nearly the whole population of the free States bound, by chains either of prejudice, or interest, or ignorance, to the tremendous car of Slavery; and those who loved to have it so, had mounted the engine and were driving at rail-road speed, withersoever they would; and when a few awoke, and saw the nation thus hastening to the precipice of ruin, to be dashed in the abyss below—what less could they do, than to cry STOP—and that too, even at a pitch of remonstrance, which should subject them to the imputation of fanaticism or madness.

It is not unlikely that some of my readers, may regard the language which I shall use as unreasonably severe; and yet I do not believe, nor can I think that any man, after looking candidly at the subject, will believe that it expresses more than the truth.

My design is to draw a parallel between slavery and the evils which stand connected with it, and some of the worst evils and vices and crimes, which are ever found among men, that we may see where slavery ought to be placed in the catalogue of sins.

I. Let us look at the Roman Catholic Church. Much has been said during the last few years, of the efforts which were being made, to bring this country under subjection to the Pope of Rome. Now it is enough to make a man shudder from head to foot, though his nerves were iron, and his sinews brass, to think of the most distant possibility that such a thing may ever take place.

But what are the evils which the Romish Church inflicts, upon such as are brought under her control?

She takes away the Bible from them, and gives them no opportunity, to learn for themselves, the way to heaven. All the religious instruction, which the

people can receive, must come orally, from the lips of the priest. Slavery does the same thing precisely, to all who come under its control. They may not read the Bible, nor possess it—and can receive no religious instruction, but what comes orally from the lips of the priest. The Roman Catholic Church depends for its perpetuity, upon the ignorance of the common people. Slavery depends for its perpetuity upon the ignorance of the enslaved. Hence the great effort to shut out all *knowledge*. The Romish Church robs the laboring classes of large sums of money, to support its pope, and its cardinals, its bishops, and its priests, in idleness and luxury and profligacy. Slavery robs the laboring class of their earnings, to support another set of men in the same mode of life. The Romish Church confiscates the property, and confines, and tortures, and puts to death, such as will not submit to her rule, whenever she has the power of doing so. Slavery does the same things. Not only the property, the whole earnings, but the wife and children, the hands and feet and head, the whole body and soul of the enslaved, are confiscated, and appropriated to the use of men in power. Slavery also has tortures for its victims. It applies the scourge, until the blood runs down their lacerated bodies in streams, and in a multitude of ways inflicts its cruelties, upon such as will not yield an entire submission to its rule. If any refuse to submit longer to their sufferings, and flee, they are followed into their hiding places, and put to death. Others are whipped until death ensues; others are driven to hard labor without proper food or rest, until they sink down and die.

But the Romish Church does not, ordinarily, strip the whole multitude of its victims, of everything that bears the name of property, and take the ownership of themselves out of their hands, and drive them by the scourge to hard labor from the beginning to the end of the year. She does not measure out to them

their scanty pittance of food, nor name every rag of clothing which they are permitted to put on, nor mock at all the relations of social life—stealing the child out of the father's arms, or off the mother's breast; and the wife out of the bosom of her husband; and separating them for life, depriving them of all the protection of law, and subjecting them daily to every injury and suffering, which avarice and passion and lust can load upon them. Nor are men, women and children, under her influence, like cattle, raised to sell. Such enormities as these are left to be practiced by slavery; and to be legalized in the statute books of a people, who have boastingly regarded themselves, as the most thoroughly christianized nation on which the sun ever shines. I say then, there are points, in which slavery far outdoes the Romish Church in cruelty and guilt; binds heavier burdens, and more grievous to be borne, and lays them on men's shoulders, and will not touch them with a finger. Slavery also, like Romanism, cries out against free discussion, and the liberty of the press, and does not hesitate to silence both, so far as she has the power; and to make every possible advance toward it where the power is not possessed. Hence the outrages committed on peaceful citizens, travelling in slaveholding States; and the efforts to put down discussion, in almost all the States which call themselves free. Hence the destruction of Birney's press in Cincinnati, and the stones cast in the streets of Troy, at the hero Weld, who, like his Master, goes about doing good. Hence all the shameful outrages by which that place has been disgraced, and the still more shameful neglect of the proper authorities to protect peaceful, respectable, high-minded, and pious men, in the exercise of the most noble of all their rights, that of publicly expressing and defending their own opinions. Hence all the excesses practised in this and several adjoining States, to lay the heaven-born spirit of liberty

asleep, even among her own New England hills. Hence the long, loud, and repeated threats of dissolving the Union, which Southern men have sent up on our ears, and which even some of our Governors have echoed back, in declarations that it is felony for a man to speak what he thinks on a particular subject. Who doubts, that slavery if she could, would go so far in locking up the opinions of men within their own breasts, as ever popery went in the height of her power. She had, already, well nigh, taken away the power of free discussion, from those who dare to assert the rights of their fellow men, and would soon have completed the *work*.

II. Let us look at Infidelity. The evil arising from this source is, that it blinds men respecting their duty to God and their own souls, and thus leads them down to hell. It urges itself, however, on no man by force. A spark of honest desire to know the truth and walk in its light, is at all times, abundantly sufficient, to show a man the sophistry and wilful unbelief by which such doctrines are supported; and to warn him of all their snares, and to guide his feet into the path of life. A spark of honesty in the admission of the plainest principles of common sense, will show a man that there is a God, that the Bible is a revelation of his will, and that he will not let the wicked go unpunished, who refuse to repent. He, therefore, who suffers himself to be borne upon the shoals and rocks, and down the cataracts, or into the whirlpools of wilful unbelief, goes there warned of his danger, and with abundant means and opportunities for escape. But slavery wrests the Bible out of the hands of immortal men by force. In the midst of a Christian land, with the clear light of heaven shining all around them, they are shut out from this light, and left to grope their way in darkness down to hell. That I may not be suspected of declaring more than the truth on this point, I will just give a specimen of the laws of slave States, touching this point.

'A law of South Carolina, passed in 1800, authorizes the infliction of twenty lashes, on every slave, found in an assembly, convened for mental instruction, held in a confined or secret place, although in presence of a white.' That this cuts them off, and was designed to cut them off from all means of mental instruction, nobody doubts; for who in that State is permitted to give slaves mental instruction in a public place? 'Another law, inposes a fine of a hundred pounds, on any person who may teach a slave to write.' 'In North Carolina, to teach a slave to read or write, or to sell or give him any book, [the Bible not excepted,] or pamphlet, is punished with thirty-nine lashes, or imprisonment if the offender be a free negro, but if a white, then with a fine of three hundred dollars. In Georgia, if a white teach a free negro or a slave, to read or write, he is fined five hundred dollars, and imprisoned at the discretion of the Court. If the offender be a colored man, bond or free, he may be fined, or whipped, at the discretion of the Court. A father, therefore, may not teach his own children, on penalty of being flogged.' 'This was enacted in 1829.' 'In Louisiana, the penalty for teaching slaves to read or write, is one year's imprisonment. In Georgia, also, any justice may, at his discretion, break up any religious assembly of slaves, and may order each slave present to be corrected, without trial, by receiving on the bare back, twenty-five stripes with a whip, switch, or cowskin.' 'In South Carolina, slaves may not meet together, before sunrise or after sunset, for the purpose of religious instruction, unless a majority of the meeting be of whites, on penalty of twenty lashes well laid on. In Virginia, all *evening* meetings of slaves, at any meeting-house, are unequivocally forbidden.' Of course they may not meet in the day time, for then they must labor. Possibly they may on the Sabbath, but their opportunities of doing it even then, are few and far between.

You see, therefore, the strenuous efforts which are made by legislative enactments, to shut out all light from the mind of the slave, and surround him with a thick impenetrable darkness, in the midst of which he must live and die; and from which his eye never can open, till death frees him from the grasp of his oppressor. I am aware, that the privilege of giving oral religious instruction to slaves is, to some extent, granted, and that some slave masters do pretend to teach their slaves the truths of religion. But what is the amount of all this? A writer for the New York Evangelist, has, some months since, given us what he terms 'sketches of slavery from a year's residence in Florida,' in one number of which, he speaks on this very point. He had conversed with slaveholders on the subject. One man thought it a very fine thing to give slaves religious instruction. 'I called my slaves together,' said he, 'one Sabbath day, *the only time which I have been able to get this season!!!* and read to them the account of Abraham's servant going to seek a wife for Isaac. I took occasion from this, to speak to them of the integrity of this servant—what an amount of property was committed to his care, how faithfully he watched over it, how careful not to purloin any of the rich jewels to himself, how anxious to return at the appointed time.' 'I think,' said this slaveholder, 'that religious instruction must be decidedly beneficial.' Another master with whom I conversed, continues the writer, believed nothing about giving religious instruction to slaves. He regarded it as all a farce. 'There is no man,' said this slaveholder, 'who will read the whole Bible to his slaves. If I recollect right, there is something in the Bible which speaks of *breaking every yoke, and letting the oppressed go free;* and there is no master,' continued he, 'who will read *that* to his slaves, not even your good Methodists; and if we must not read the whole Bible, we may as well read none at all.' Such were the views of slaveholders.

I have somewhere read the following. Whether authentic, or not, it illustrates my point, and expresses, I am fully persuaded, very much of truth. It was the remark of a slave, after the master had been reading the Bible to him and his companion. 'Massa bery *good* Christian; him bery *good* Christian *indeed*. Read de Bible to us; but him always read de same chapter, what says, servants obey your massas in all tings.'

Here, unquestionably, we have just about the truth, on the subject of giving religious instruction to slaves. Multitudes never attempt it, and those who do, are sure to do it for their own interest, rather than for the good of the slave. That there are exceptions, I am willing to admit; but all that I have said, exists unquestionably, to a wide extent, and to an extent provided for by law. I am aware that the gospel is preached, to some extent, and that some truly embrace it; but these are the exceptions, and not the general rule. My claim is, that slavery destroys more souls among the slaves, by keeping the Bible away from them, than infidelity could do in its place, if they were permitted to have the Bible and read for themselves; and it seems to me that this is a position which no honest man will dispute. Slavery also destroys souls by force, when infidelity could only decoy, and therefore leave an opportunity for escape.

III. Let us compare slavery with the making and vending of ardent spirits. Do not suspect me of a wish to palliate, or extenuate the evils, or the guilt of this abominable business. I have often dwelt on these, until my soul has been pained within me, and until I am well persuaded that all, and far more than all which has ever been said or *dreamed* on that subject, is strictly true. I am aware, too, that a highly gifted mind, has, some years since, drawn a parallel between intemperance and the slave trade, in which he has endeavored to show, that the latter is an evil

of the least magnitude. But I am comparing now the business of making and vending ardent spirits, with slavery as it exists at this time in our country.

It has often been said with unquestionable truth, that from three to five hundred thousand miserable men in our nation, are confirmed drunkards, and that from thirty to fifty thousand go down every year to a drunkard's grave; and inasmuch, as the drunkard cannot inherit the kingdom of God, they must go down to the depths of hell. A most fearful destruction this indeed. But instead of five hundred thousand, there are not less than two millions two hundred forty-five thousand in our country, held in the darkness of slavery. How many of these, think you, have sufficient light to guide their feet to heaven? Shall we say one half? Who can believe it? But if this be admitted, there are still more than twice the number shut up by slavery, in a state of darkness, that leads to hell, than have ever, by any man, been estimated in the ranks of intemperance. Is it not most clearly a truth, then, that slavery destroys more souls, than the making and vending of ardent spirit? When we consider, too, that slavery seizes its victims by force, and binds and rivets chains upon them which they cannot throw off, and thus leaves their souls unprovided with any of the means of grace, to die without hope; and that strong drink leaves men abundant opportunities to escape if they will; who will not say that slavery is unspeakably more to be dreaded: that it is an evil of far greater magnitude than the other? The intemperate man, may at any time, break away from his bondage, give up his cups, enjoy the means of grace, embrace the truth and live. But the victim of slavery, shut out from all true knowledge of God, deprived by law of all opportunity of learning his Maker's will, or of studying the way of salvation by Christ; what can he do, but remain in his darkness and sin, until the darkness of eternal night closes in upon his benight-

ed soul, and he is left for eternity to suffer the consequences of unpardoned sin. True, the guilt of him who dies the willing victim of intemperance, must be greater than that of the poor benighted slave, and his future punishment consequently more severe, but if slavery holds twice the number of victims exposed to hopeless reprobation, then it destroys twice the number of souls, and is therefore the greatest evil.

IV. Let us compare slavery with theft and robbery. Let me give a case for illustration. You are a husband and a father. You commenced the world a poor man, but by hard labor and economy, you have collected together a sum of money, which, you believe, if well invested, will place you and your family in circumstances of respectability and comfort. From statements made to you, or from your own observation, by going upon the ground, you come to the conclusion that your money can be more profitably appropriated, by removing to the West. Accordingly you convert every thing you possess into cash, and make all the necessary arrangements for a removal with your family. On the night previous to your intended departure, a thief enters your dwelling house, takes possession of all you have, and makes off, and you never hear of it more. Or suppose you are already on your journey, and after many days of fatiguing travel, find yourself near the place of your destination ; when you are met by the highwayman, who, with a pistol at your breast, robs you of your last farthing. Now I suppose this would be a case, where theft and robbery would stand out in their worst features. It would be a trying case indeed. After years of toil, to gain something for yourself and household, you are in a moment penniless, with your destitute, needy family upon your hands. All you can do, is again to betake yourself to hard labor, to provide for those you love.

But suppose, after all this, you were doomed to see

your children torn from you, one after another, and sold under the hammer, to go you know not where; to be subjected to the cruelty, and abuse, and outrage, of any monster into whose hands they might chance to fall; where you could never see or hear from them more; and you left with no means of redress, to sit down beside your broken hearted wife, and mingle your tears and sighs and sobs with hers, with no prospect of relief until death. But in the midst of it all, even the wife of your bosom, dear as your own heart's blood, is sundered from you, and sold forever from your embrace, and you at last go off under the hammer, to the highest bidder, and are driven by the lash, to groan, and sweat, under long, long days of unrequited toil, with no relief till you die. This is slavery. It robs a man of all his earnings during his whole life. Labor as he may, sweat as he may, he can never have a farthing to call his own. Just hear the laws on this subject. 'In South Carolina a slave is not permitted to keep a boat, or raise and breed for his own benefit, any horses, cattle, sheep, or hogs, under pain of forfeiture, and *any person may take them from him.*' I ask, what is that but robbery—except it is unspeakably worse, because it is legalized—and the poor man has no means of redress? It is made lawful for *any person* to rob him, by the letter of the statute.

'In Georgia, the master is fined thirty dollars for suffering a slave to hire himself to another, for his own benefit. In Maryland, the master forfeits thirteen dollars for each month that his slave is permitted to receive wages on his own account. In Virginia, every master is finable, who permits a slave to work for himself at wages. In North Carolina, all horses, cattle, hogs, or sheep, that shall belong to any slave, or be of any slave's mark in this State, shall be seized and sold by the county Wardens. In Mississippi, the master is forbidden under the penalty of fifty dollars, to let a slave raise cotton for

himself, or to keep stock of any description.' Now where is the man under heaven, who would not say, that such a system of legalized oppression, was infinitely worse than theft or robbery, when practiced toward himself? And what, I ask, makes the crime any less heinous, when practiced toward a colored man, than it would be if practiced toward either of us? The poor slave feels such wrongs as deeply as we could, and groans under them as loudly, and sheds tears as profusely as we would do; but there he is, without means of redress. And in addition to all this robbery of everything in the shape of property; the poor slave is robbed of his children, and his wife, and robbed of himself—and has nothing left him, but a miserable existence, subjected to the most cruel, heart-withering tyranny, that was ever practiced by man on his fellow-man, since this world has borne the curse of its God. When the thief, or the robber, takes your property, you can repossess it whenever you can find it; or if not, you can acquire more, and your wife, and children, and yourself, are still your own. Theft and robbery are nothing compared with the wickedness of slavery. Make them as bad as you please, and they do not deserve to be named the same week. The difference between them is too great to be described, too wide to be measured, too deep to be fathomed. The slaveholder who goes impenitent to hell, will find himself loaded down with a weight of guilt and damnation, that will sink him out of sight of the worst highway robber that ever walked the earth. But you will say the high-way robber is often guilty of murder. Well, and so is the slaveholder often guilty of murder—and this brings me to my next point.

V. Let us now compare slavery with murder. Who does not know, that oftentimes, when the poor slave can no longer endure the outrages practiced upon him, and flies, and takes to the woods, he is hunted down by dogs and guns, and thus put to death, just for trying to escape. Every body knows

that it is a thing of frequent occurrence. Put to death—just for trying to escape from his sufferings and his wrongs. Again, it is a maxim with them, that at particular seasons, they can afford to work a set of hands to death, for the purpose of getting their crops early to market, and thereby securing a much greater price. The writer of sketches of slavery, from a year's residence in Florida, speaks of this particularly, as coming under his observation while there; and I have seen this fact referred to by other writers in public print. They do not hesitate to sacrifice the lives of their slaves to hard labor, when it will increase their profits. Besides, the poor slave is often whipped until the result is death. Is not my point made clear, abundantly clear, that slavery is worse than murder? Would you not prefer to be met by a highwayman, and shot dead, rather than have your life worn out on a slave plantation, toiling to enrich the hard-hearted wretch who had stripped you of all your rights? Would you not prefer this to being whipped, and then laid away to die under the effect? And is not the wretch who inflicts death by such means, to enrich himself, more guilty, than he who blows out the traveller's brains and seizes his money to enrich himself? Surely, my point needs no more illustration. Slavery *is worse* than murder. But there is still this point to be taken into the account. If a man shoots you dead by the way side, it is your own fault if you do not go to heaven. You have the Bible, and the gospel. You know that there is a Saviour, and if you have not repented of your sins, and believed in him for salvation, you are without excuse. If you lose your soul, the fault is your own. Though murdered—you might if you would, have been saved. But the poor slave is prevented from learning the way of salvation while he lives, and then worn out with toil, he dies and is lost forever. Surely I need say no more—what honest man is not prepared to say that slavery is worse than murder?

VI. I come now to a point, which, in the estimation of some, perhaps, ought to be suppressed. But I am a servant of the Most High God, and to him accountable; and as such, placed under solemn obligation to cry aloud and spare not, and show this guilty nation its sins. This, with the Lord's help, I will do. It is high time also, that our mothers, and our wives, our sisters, and our daughters, knew the sufferings and the wrongs of the poor defenceless female slave, that they may lift up their strong cries to Heaven in her behalf.

I wish, therefore, to compare slavery with fornication and adultery, and the violation of female purity by force. And, my hearers, I do not ask you to believe my naked assertion on this point, I will show you proof, as it has been my endeavor to do on every point previously considered.

Look again at the laws. In Kentucky—'any negro, mulatto, or Indian, *bond or free, who shall at any time, lift his hand in opposition to any white person,* (mark the language) shall receive thirty lashes, on his or her bare back, *well laid on,* by order of the justice.'

This regulation, or something very much like it, is believed to be in force in all the slaveholding States. Look now at the condition in which this places the poor female. She is at the uncontrolled will of the master. He may order her, by fear of the lash, into any secret place where he pleases; the same fear of the lash, enables him to accomplish all the hellish purposes of his heart, and then, by the same means, he can seal her lips in silence, that the crime be never divulged. During all this time, if she lift a hand against him, he can procure thirty lashes for her, to be well laid on, by order of the justice, in addition to all he pleases to inflict himself. Let us now just remember, that in addition to such a regulation, no person of color can be a witness against a white man in a court of justice, and you

see the exact condition of the poor female slave. There is nothing so foul in pollution, nothing so horrid in crime, but she may be driven by the lash, to be the victim of it, and she must not lift a hand in self-defence—and then she dare not divulge her wrongs, or, if she does, there is no power on earth, from whom she can gain any redress; or even protection, against a repeated infliction of the same evils.

If slaveholders had framed laws for the express purpose of placing the purity and virtue of their females entirely in their own power, they could not have done it *more* effectually, than it is now done. It would seem to be a system, framed for the very purpose of giving them full power, to pollute by force, just as many as they pleased. At any rate, they know the power is in their hands, and there are developements enough which show that they are not slow to use it.* There are a multitude of facts on this subject, and I will just relate one or two, because I know them to be authentic.

A particular friend of mine, who spent several years in a slave State, gave me the following as an occurrence which transpired in the place where he resided, and at the very time of his residence there. A man,—I will not say gentleman, and in truth, I ought to say monster,—who had a wife and a family of grown up daughters, residing with him, had also in his house, a young female slave. This slave became the mother of a child, and it was a matter of public notoriety, that the head of the family was the father of it. So barefaced had the thing become, that the man found it necessary to take some measures to get his shame, and the extreme mortification of his wife and daughters out of his mind.† He ac-

* Read Bourne's Picture of Slavery.

† This occurrence was not very far South, otherwise, there would have been no shame.

cordingly sold her for the southern market, and though it was with some difficulty that he could persuade the purchaser to take the infant, he at length did so, and the wretched mother, the victim of the master's beastliness and abominable crime, was taken, or rather torn from the house, and borne away, literally uttering cries and shrieks of distress. Now I would like to know whether there is any language under heaven, that will sufficiently set forth the guilt af such a wretch?

The following fact was related by a pious physician who resides in the city of Washington. It came to me in such a way that I know it to be a fact.

'There is,' said this physician, 'residing in this city, a young female slave, who is pious, and a member of the same church to which I belong. She is a mulatto, and her complexion nearly white. One day, she came to me in great trouble and distress, and wished me to tell her what she could do. She stated to me, that her master's son, was in the practice of compelling her whenever he pleased, to go with him to his bed. She had been obliged to submit to it, and she knew of no way to obtain any relief. She could not appeal to her master for protection, for he was guilty of like practices himself. She wished to know what she could do? Poor girl, what could she do? She could not lift a hand in self-defence. She could not flee, for she was a slave. She would be brought back and beaten, and be placed perhaps in a worse condition than before. And there she was, a pious girl, with all the feelings of her heart alive to the woes of her condition, the victim of the brutal lusts of a dissolute young man; with no means of defence or escape, and no prospect before her, but that of being again and again polluted, whenever his unbridled passions should chance to dictate.

Perhaps there is a mother here, who has a pious daughter, and I would like to come into her heart,

and ask what would be her feelings, if that daughter were placed in such circumstances as these; or what would be the feelings of that daughter, if she were thus bound down, to a condition so much worse than death. I do solemnly believe, that there is no adulterer under heaven, no fornicator, covered with a guilt so deep and damning, as the wretch that will pursue such a course of conduct as that. Even the victim of seduction is but decoyed from the paths of virtue, but here is a disciple of Christ, bound, and that too, by the laws of the land, and laid, a helpless victim, on the altar of prostitution.

Here, then, is a crime, punishable, under most governments, with death, and the victim has the power of redress, and certainly of escape from a repetition of the outrage; but slavery places its victims where there is no redress, and no deliverance; and gives the slaveholder full power, to roll, and riot, upon the virtue and innocence of as many defenceless females as he pleases, with no power under heaven to call him to account. I say again, if they had made their laws for the express purpose, of securing to themselves this power, they could not have done the thing more effectually; and no man, who has ever seen or heard much of southern practices, is ignorant of the truth, that such things as I have been relating, are the common occurrences of every day. O, when I reflect on this subject, I could almost pray for a voice like a volcano; and for words that would scorch and burn like drops of melted lava, that I might thunder the guilt of the slaveholder in his ears, and talk to him in language which he *would* feel. Who will say, that this system of slavery, under which no female, who has a drop of African blood in her veins, has any defence for her virtue, against any white man, even for an hour, and no possibility of escaping from pollution, is not unspeakably worse than fornication and adultery, or even the violation of purity by force, where there are laws to ap-

prehend and punish for such a crime? Do not suspect me of a wish to palliate these vices. They were never painted, in colorings too foul and loathsome; nor was their guilt ever portrayed in a blackness deeper than the reality—but, I say, the system of slavery is a thing fouler, blacker, guiltier still.

VII. But let us look again, and compare slavery with treason. Benedict Arnold was a traitor. At a time, when his country was in great distress and difficulties, he formed the mad purpose, of delivering her over to the will of her enemies; and did what he could, to accomplish his end. Every breast in the land, burned with indignation against him—and, but for his flight, he would have ended his days on a gallows.

But suppose he had accomplished his end, and the unjust laws against which our fathers fought and bled, had remained in full force upon us until now? I am bold to say, that we should not have suffered wrongs, that ought to be mentioned, in comparison with the wrongs of the slave. There was a heavy and unjust taxation, but it was not stripping us of all our earnings for life. There was a refusal, to give us a just representation, in framing the laws, by which we were to be governed; but it was not stripping us from all protection of law, and reducing us in that respect, to the condition of cattle or swine. It was not stripping us of all our rights, and robbing us of our children, and subjecting our wives, our sisters and our daughters, to wanton and promiscuous violation, with no power to lift a hand in self-defence, and depriving us of the power of giving them protection. The husband or father, if he be a slave, may look on, and see his wife or daughter polluted before his eyes, and all the laws of the land, are against his lifting a finger for their deliverance. He may toil ever so hard, during his whole life, and he cannot be worth a farthing. The treason of Arnold, had it prospered, would never have

subjected us to such evils as these. Besides, had we remained until this time British Colonies, other things being as they now *are*, this evil of slavery would now have been done away, and perhaps years ago. When I think of this, if I had uot confidence in the overruling Providence of God, I could almost weep, that it did not seem best to the God of armies, to leave us under the control of a power, that would have uprooted this destructive Bohon Upas, which is still throwing its broad branches of death and desolation, over such wide spreading portions of our otherwise happy land. Sure I am, that Arnold's treason would never have made our land groan under such woes, and send up to heaven such cries of distress, as are wrung daily from the breasts of the helpless millions whom our nation now enslaves. I say again, therefore, that the system of slavery, is unspeakably worse than treason. But I cannot pursue this parallel further. I have glanced at what men regard as the worst of evils and crimes; but when weighing the guilt of slavery, we find that everything which we can place in the opposite scale, at once kicks the beam. It has a weight of guilt attached to it, that can be balanced by the guilt of no other *crime*.

There is one more point to the thing, which I wish to name, as giving blackness and aggravation to its guilt, and then I have done. It is, that multitudes of the professed disciples of Christ, come forward to justify the system of slavery, and to claim for it the sanctions of the word of God. Yes, this system of slavery, red as it is with crime, black as it is with guilt, and foul as it is with impurity, is called, even by professed Christians and Ministers, an institution of the Bible. Oh, it seems to me, that if the long suffering patience of a forbearing God, was ever insulted beyond endurance, it must be, when the protection of his authority is claimed, for the perpetuity of such a system as this. There is no crime which

it does not legalize—no sin which it does not protect—no depth of impurity which it does not dig, and in which it does not permit vile men to wallow. And yet there are not wanting men, Christian men, and ministers who wait at the altar of God, who call this an institution of Heaven, and claim for it the authority of the Most High. I know that they would plead for slavery, without the abominations which I have named, and claim to look upon such crimes, and vices, with as deep an abhorrence as we.

But who cannot see, that slavery is the common mother of all this brood of hellish ills; in whose frightfully prolific womb they are conceived, and by whom they are brought forth. Slavery *itself* is the thing to be reprobated? You must put the odious dam to death, or she will continue to multiply her infernal progeny, and send them abroad among us, prolific in woes. You cannot have slavery without its concomitant evils. I know men may be found, whose hearts have felt the power of the religion of Christ, but whose moral sensibilities are not sufficiently awake, to lead them to obey God on this subject, to break every yoke and let the oppressed go free, who claim that *they* treat their slaves kindly, and that under such circumstances, slavery is justifiable; and that moreover, they are not accountable for the crimes which other men commit among their slaves, or for the wrongs which they practice upon them. Kindness to an enslaved man! It is a contradiction in terms. You might as well rob him of his all on earth, cut off his hands and feet, and bore out his eyes, and then take him into your house, and treat him kindly to make up for the wrong.

The slave, under the best circumstances, is the victim of robbery every day. Day by day, all his life, he is robbed of the fruits of his labor, that it may go to enrich another. He has hands indeed, but he may not use them for his own benefit. Feet he has, but they may not bear him where *he* would

go. They must go and come at the master's bidding, and not his. He has eyes, but he may not look on the light of science, or on the clearer, purer light of God's revealed truth. Even the sun shines not for him, as it only serves to light him to his unwilling and unrequited toil. Of what use then, are hands, and feet, and eyes, to him? He can no more use them for his own benefit, than if he had none—and yet you think to make up to him by kindness what you have taken away; and call yourself a disciple of Christ, and think that Heaven will reward you for being so kind to your poor, oppressed, down trodden victim, whom you compel to labor unrewarded, for your good. Is that the religion of Christ? Is that loving your neighbor as yourself?

But, the most kind hearted, and upright, and pious slaveholder in the land, so far as he approves of the system of slavery, and pleads for its perpetuity, is at best, accessary to all the evils to which the system gives rise. He is therefore a partaker in its guilt, and will hereafter find his hands stained and polluted with its vices and its crimes. He who has said in his Bible, Be not partaker of other men's sins, has also said, Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, *and no man can be guiltless who refuses to do this.*

But perhaps it will be asked; admitting that slavery is everything that you claim it to be, what right have you to interfere? I claim no right of interference, based on the existing laws of our country, for these, as we have seen, are so abominably wicked and oppressive, as fully to sanction all the evils and crimes which we have been considering. Still, I claim, that I have a right to interfere,* and to do all in my power, by every possible means, for the ex-

*The author disapproves of interference at the expense of human life, but believes that all possible means short of the shedding of blood, are justifiable.

tinction of slavery. Do any ask, on what that right is based? I answer, on the statute book of Almighty God—on the pillars of heaven's eternal throne and better authority than this, to sanction my interference, I do not ask. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' 'Why is my neighbor?' Let Jesus Christ answer. 'A certain man, no matter who, went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounding him, departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance, there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.' How exactly like the conduct of many ministers of the gospel, toward the slave. They just look on his sufferings, and pass by, making no effort to give him relief. 'And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.' Just so multitudes of professing Christians conduct toward the slave. They look on him, pass on, and leave him alone in his woes. 'But, a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was, and when *he* saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence and gave them to the host, and said unto him, take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee.' Here our Savior has shown us what it is to act the part of a neighbor. This Samaritan found a fellow being in distress. He stopped not to inquire who he was, but proceeded at once to do as he would like to have others do to him in like circumstances. And now the command of Christ is, 'Go thou and do likewise.' Wherever, therefore, we find a fellow being in distress, we find in him a neighbor, one whom we are bound to love as we love ourselves. We are to identify ourselves with him, and

feel for his wrongs and his woes, as we would for our own in like circumstances, and are to do for him, so far as lies in our power, everything, which, in like circumstances, we could wish others to do for us. Tell me not then, that I have no right to interfere, when I see more than two millions of my neighbors, yes, of my brethren, my own fellow countrymen, groaning and toiling, and dying, under the unparalleled wrongs of slavery. I have no right *not* to interfere. I am a traitor to my neighbor, and a rebel against my God, if I forbear to interfere; if I fail to use the last power which my Maker has given me, in pleading for the immediate deliverance of my fellow men from their sufferings and their chains. I trample on the universal law of the infinite Jehovah, if I leave undone anything in my power, which I would wish to have done for me, if all the miseries of slavery were mine.

But it is not merely by looking at the general principles of God's government, that I learn my duty toward the toil-worn, agonized, suffering slave. I find positive direction for this specific case. Jer. 21 : 12. —'Thus saith the Lord—Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.' Who is spoiled, if it be not the slave? Is he not spoiled of everything? Spoiled of all his earnings—spoiled of the child whom he loves—spoiled of the wife that is bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh—spoiled even of the ownership of himself, and spoiled of his immortal soul, by being robbed of the light that would guide his feet to heaven? And the poor suffering female slave—of what is she not spoiled? Spoiled of all that protection, which the innocent and helpless, have a right to claim, even of the savage. Spoiled of all the affectionate tenderness, which woman everywhere, has a right to expect; spoiled even of

her virtue, and that by law, for we have seen that the laws have placed her, where she cannot preserve it, if she would.

Who then, I ask again, is spoiled, if it be not the slave? And who is an oppressor, if it be not the man who holds him in bondage, and inflicts all these wrongs upon him? While, therefore, I hear the God of heaven saying, 'Deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go forth like fire, and burn, that none can quench it,' can I expect to escape the fury of that fire, if I shut my ears against the mandate, which thunders upon me from the presence chamber, and from the lips of Him, who declares himself King of kings, and Lord of lords? Tell me not, that I have no right to interfere—no right to plead for the deliverance 'of the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor. I may not fail to do it—lest the fire of God's fury kindle upon me, for my disregard of his high command. And the same, is true of all my readers. Unless you have a right to disobey Almighty God, you have no right to leave anything undone, which you might do, for the deliverance of the slave.

But who is the slave? He is a man—made in the image of God—and bears as much of God's image, remember, as though he had the complexion, and the features, and the limbs, of the white man. Where is the man with a pale face, even among slaveholders, who will stand up, before the face of heaven, and claim that he bears more of God's image than his slave? He would show the image of the devil, large as life, had he the pride, and effrontery, to do such a deed of daring impiety. The slave is made in the image of his God, and to him God gave dominion over the works of his hand, as much as to the white man. For him God lighted up the sun and moon, and made the heavens resplendent with stars, as much as for us. For him God made the breath of morning, and the calm stillness of the

summer eve—for him the deep blue sky was spread a canopy, and for him puts on alternate tints of purple and of gold. For him the lanscape smiles in green, and flowers spring up to beautify his path, and trees hang out their foilage, and bend beneath their burdens of delicious fruit. For him the fields wave with their ripening grain—for him the valleys yield their corn—for him the flocks and herds lay down their treasures, and the sea sends up its inexhaustible supplies. For him the limpid stream, the clear pure fountain were provided, and for him the balmy air, echoing with melody of birds. Ah, and for him, remember it ye who dare withhold it from him—for him the Bible was given. Who dare say, that God provided these things for the master, more than for the man whom he enslaves.

But what is more than all, for him the Son of God came down and died. The blood gushed from his heart as freely, and in streams as pure, for the oppressed and broken hearted slave, as for us, or for the man who dares enslave God's image—for him the river of water of life, proceedeth clear as crystal from the throne of God and the Lamb—for him the streets of the New Jerusalem are paved with gold, and for him, the glory of God and the Lamb, shall pour forth its light, in beams that shall forever hide the brightness of the noonday sun—and for him are made ready the joys of an eternal heaven. Yes, this is the being whom slavery binds in chains, and robs of all the richest gifts of heaven, and sinks in ignorance and pollution down to hell. Oh, if the whole arch of heaven above us, ever echoed with the loud threatenings of an indignant God—it may now be heard to echo with the fearful interrogation—'Shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?'

And now, will you look on, and seal your lips in silence, and say that you have no right to interfere for the deliverance of the slave? Do you not hear the God of heaven saying, 'Deliver him that is

spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go forth like fire and burn that none can quench it;' and dare you disobey? Do you ask what shall be done for his deliverance? I answer, let every pulpit thunder forth this mandate of the most High God—let every minister at the altar cry aloud and spare not and lift up his voice like a trumpet—and show this people their transgressions; this guilty people their sins. Let every press groan to be delivered of its obligation, to make known the Almighty's will—and let such as can pray, pray *now*, that God will break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free. Especially, let woman—woman, the last to linger around the cross, and the first to find the sepulchre of God's crucified Son, linger long at the altar of prayer, and be found early upon her knees, wrestling at the throne of grace; and let all who fear God or love man, resolve before high Heaven, that they will not rest, till every chain is broken, every yoke buried, every scourge and fetter burned.

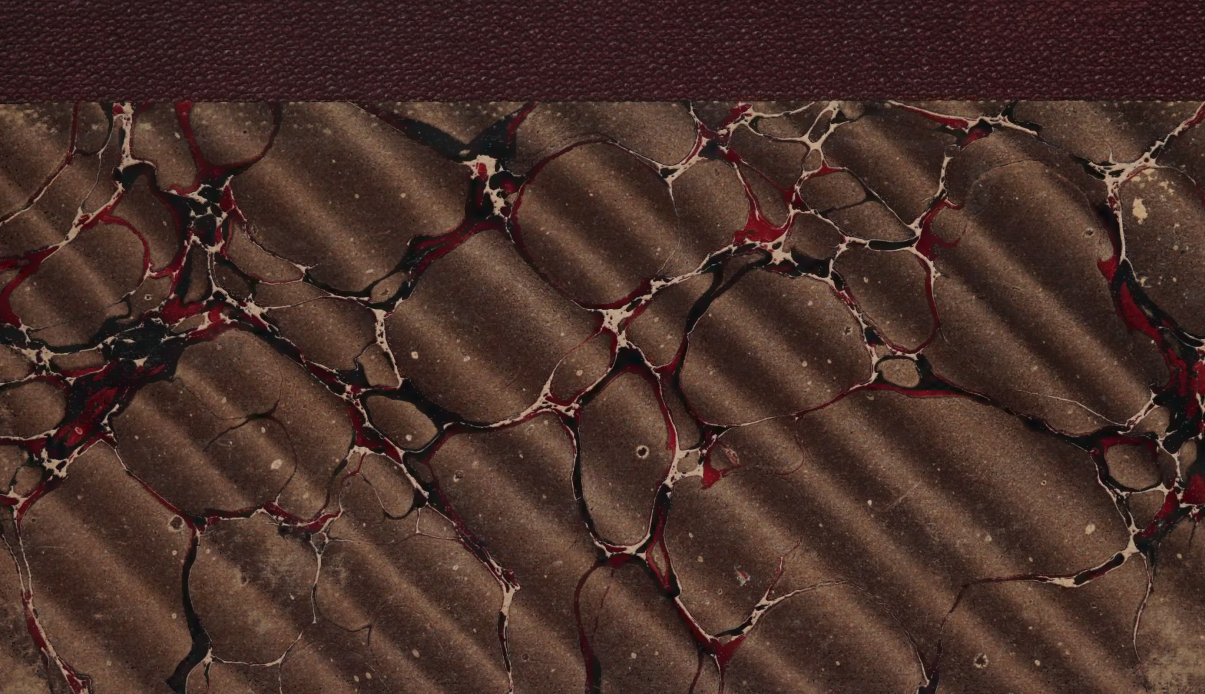
But I seem to hear some one ask—must we think only of the slave—must we not regard the master's rights? Rights! What rights? Right to hold his fellow man in bondage for one hour? He might as well claim a right to sit on the throne of God. He has no such right. But must he relinquish all the property he now holds in slaves? He has no such property. He has no more right to call them his property, than he has to call the angels in heaven his property. God gave man dominion over the beasts of the field—but over God's own image he never gave him dominion. The wicked, heaven-daring laws of men, confer the *power* of enslaving man—but the *right* they never gave, for it was never theirs to give. There is no such thing as property in man—there never can be. We do not ask the slaveholder to relinquish any right. We call upon him, on the authority of God, to break every yoke and let the oppressed go free. We do not ask them

to give up their property. We tell them that God declares them to be 'like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain; and that the prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity and divining lies unto them, saying thus saith the Lord, when the Lord hath not spoken. That the people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy, and have oppressed the stranger wrongfully—and that God now threatens to pour out his indignation upon them, and to consume them with the fire of his wrath, and to recompense their way upon their own heads.' No—we do not ask the slaveholder to give up his property—we ask them 'to cease beating God's people to pieces—to cease grinding the face of the poor;' and when the slaveholder has done that, the lost slave will have his freedom.

But you say it would make great changes in society, to free every slave at once, and many a man, who now lives in affluence, would instantly become poor. We doubt it not. We doubt not that many a wretch, who has rolled in profusion, by robbing his fellow men of their earnings, would be obliged to go to work with his own hands to earn his bread; and this is just what he ought to have done long ago. He is made of no better clay than the lowliest of all God's creatures whom he enslaves; and there is no more reason why he should be exempted from eating his bread in the sweat of his brow. Let us arise then, with one heart, and with united voice, and with ready hands, do our utmost, to deliver the oppressed from their wrongs.

But it may still be asked, what do you expect to accomplish? We expect to make the slaveholder feel, that when he crushes an immortal soul down to the depths of hell, to gratify his own abominable selfishness, God will hold him accountable for that soul at the judgment day. We expect to make him

see, that the short-lived gratification, which he can have derived from enslaving his fellow man, will but poorly compensate him, for the eternal damnation which he must hereafter endure, if he does not repent of his abominable sin. We expect to open to him the broad claims of the infinite God, and to make him see that in his present course of conduct, he is holding himself in open exposure to the Almighty's wrath; and having thus bared his conscience to the arrows of truth, we expect to call down the Holy Spirit by our prayers, to fix these arrows deep in his heart; to reprove him of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, and thus to bring him to unfeigned repentance before God. We expect not to accomplish what we aim at with our unaided strength—but we believe that the Lord of hosts is with us, and trusting in his strength we cannot fail. Christians of every name, shall we not have your aid? Lovers of your fellow men, look at the wrongs of the slave, and weep and toil for him, that he may go free. Open your hearts and your hands to him, and remember that 'He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given he will pay him again.'

Let no one think to rid himself of obligation, on this momentous subject. Every man has a tongue, and he can use it; he has influence, and he can exert it; he has moral power, and he can put it forth; and this is all the power we need. Our efforts are aimed, not at the life of the slaveholder, but at his conscience—his moral feelings, and with the help of God, we do expect them to prevail. But, perhaps you will say, that slaveholders have no conscience on this subject. Doubtless their conscience may be dead and buried; it may have been sleeping these fifty years in its grave; but come on, one and all, let us raise the trump of truth, and blow a resurrection blast above it, that shall call it forth from its dust, to take up its whip of scorpions, and scourge

the guilty men into obedience to the commands of God. Slavery cannot long live among them. 'Behold, the hire of the laborers, who have reaped down their fields, which is of them kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped, are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.' The Lord of armies, is the fearful signification of that term; and if they cease not from their oppression, they may well expect, that the Lord of armies will not long withhold his hand. Up, my friends, and do your duty, to deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest the fire of God's fury kindle ere long upon you.